

*IN LOVELY LEBANON:  
Among the Druses of To-day*



*Despite his nondescript attire this fisherman makes an attractive figure as he uncoils his hand-net in the shallow water by the Lebanon coast*

Photo, the Rev. W. Ewing





Coaxed like many another fat-tailed sheep in Lebanon to feed on mulberry leaves until too plump to walk, this useful animal is destined for its owner's table.

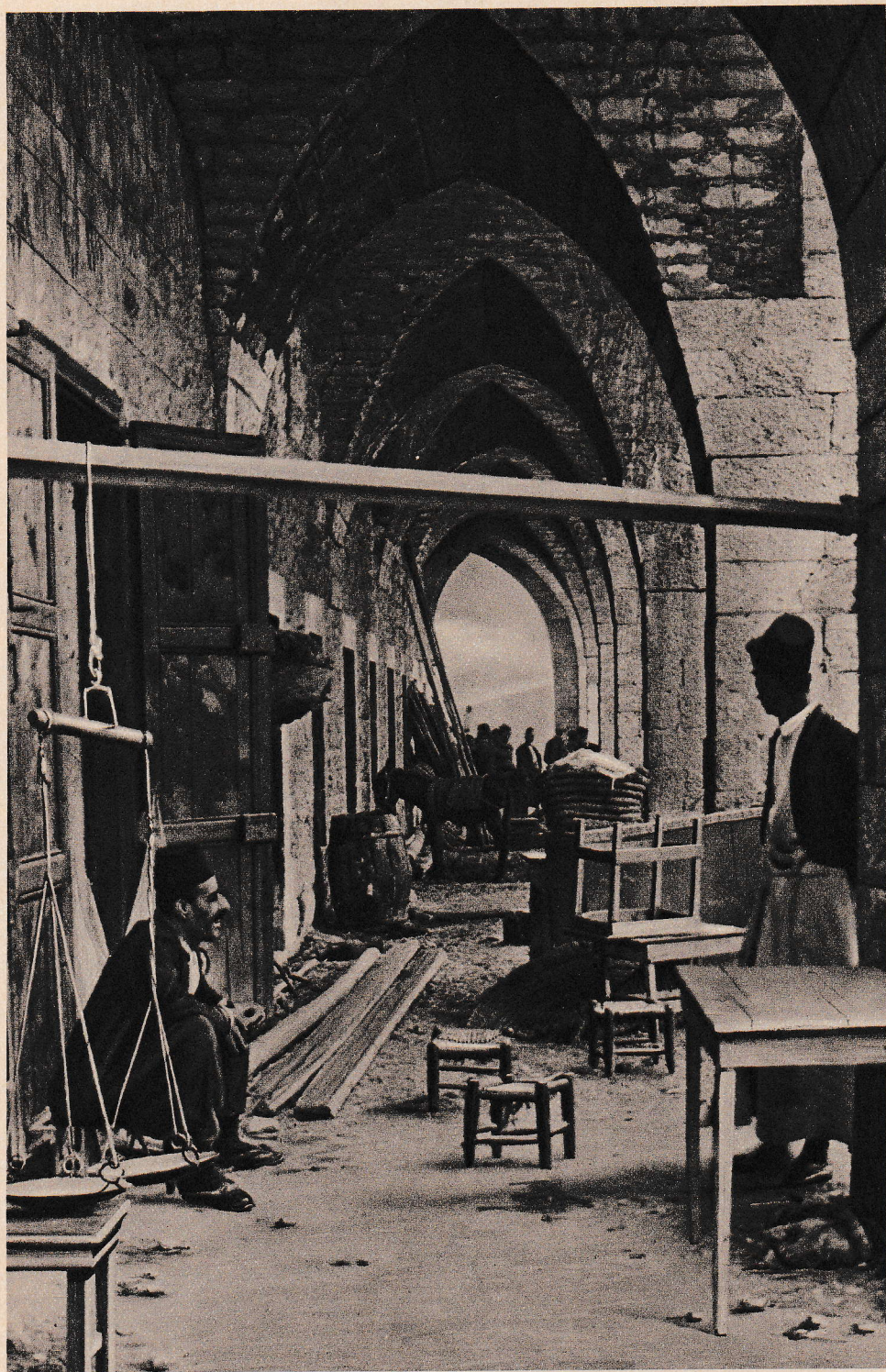




*While the "one ewe lamb" is being washed, there is a noticeable increase in the number of natives who engage in local gossip as they await an opportunity to replenish their empty pitchers at the old Lebanon village fountain*

Photo, the Rev. W. Ewing





*Stilled for the day under this fine vaulted roof is the bustle of Sarbâ's bazaar, only to break out with renewed vigour on the morrow*

Photo, P. Martindale





*This gate forms a part of the house of a Druse Chief at Metain, which rears its strong stone head on the site of an old Crusader's castle*

Photo, Canon J. T. Parfit





*Not a touch of modern Western prose vitiates the Oriental romance of this Druse village tucked away in the heart of the Lebanon heights*

Photo, Canon J. T. Parfit





*Vagrants in the Lebanon, they haunt the bazaars, rich with manifold merchandise, where tinkling tunes attract attention and generosity*

Photo, P. Martindale





*The tall headdress now rarely figures in Druse feminine costume, but a young bride eagerly dons aught that is becoming to her girlish beauty*

Photo, Bonfils



# Lebanon

## The Mountain Home of Maronite & Druze

By the Rev. W. Ewing, D.D.

Author of "Arab and Druze at Home"

**G**REAT Lebanon, or Jebel Libnan, is a stretch of mountainous country in Syria, running for a hundred miles along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Cut off from the hills of Upper Galilee by the savage gorge of the Litany (Leontes), it rises gradually until it culminates in a group of lofty peaks, all over 10,000 feet high (Kornet as-Sauda, 11,024 feet), near the famous cedar grove of Bsherreh, something over 6,000 feet high. Thence it descends to the northern boundary, Nahr el Kebir, the ancient Eleutherus, which divides it from the Jebel Nusairiyeh. From the white (leban) snowy summits that pierce the royal blue the name Lebanon is derived.

Eastward the mountain, comparatively barren in aspect, sinks steeply to the plain of el-Bekaa, the ancient Coele-Syria, which is some 3,000 feet above sea-level. The western slopes are more gradual. Here is a land of springs and water-brooks, fertile fields and fruitful orchards, with clumps of mulberry, pine, and olive. White villages are dotted pleasantly among the green. Tremendous gorges rend the mountainside. Chief among these is the profound chasm of the Nahr Kadisha, the sacred river, where awful precipices go shuddering down to depths unvisited by the sun. Villages perched on crags jutting out over the

abyss seem in the distance as if poised in air. Not far from the historic ruins of Baalbek (City of Baal) rise the Litany and Nahr el Asi (Orontes), the one flowing south and the other north. Arabian poets declare that Lebanon carries winter on its head, spring on its shoulders, autumn in its lap, with summer at its feet.

Israel's ideal boundaries included Lebanon, and its "glory" is extolled in Hebrew song; but Israel never possessed it. Some of the world's greatest warriors, from Tiglath-Pileser III. and Rameses II., to Napoleon Bonaparte and Allenby, have left records of their deeds engraved on the



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#### ARDUOUS FIELD WORK ON THE HEIGHTS OF MOUNT LEBANON

These Druse villagers are breaking up the stony ground with spade and cord. One man guides the spade by the handle, while his companion pulls on a cord attached to the handle close to the blade. The time is autumn and these strenuous workers are pushing on so as to get the wheat and barley well in and rooted before the coming of the winter snows

*Photo, the Rev. W. Ewing*

cliffs at the Dog River (Lycus), seven miles north of Beirut.

The Christian mountaineers withstood the early onrush of Islam, and to-day the Christian inhabitants outnumber the adherents of all other creeds. The Maronites, lineal descendants probably of the men whose axes rang through the cedar forests, providing timber for Solomon and the Pharaohs, are most numerous. Originally Monophysites, they took their name from Maro, their first bishop. They fought with the Crusaders against the Saracens. Later they were reconciled to Rome, their priests being allowed to marry, and the Syriac language being retained in part of their service. They are strongest in Kes Rawan, the district between the Dog River and Nahr Ibrahim, the ancient Adonis. Sidon hinterland is the country of the Greeks and Greek Catholics. Moslems and Metawileh—Shiites, possibly of Persian

origin—live towards the northern and southern extremities.

The Druses (or Druzes, Arabic Zain), a picturesque and interesting people, of mingled Syrian and Arabian blood, dwell mainly in the southern district. They believe in the divinity of el-Hakim, the mad Egyptian monarch who perished mysteriously in the tenth century. They believe that only a fixed number of human beings were created. When one dies his spirit passes into a new-born babe. The Druse may profess any creed for his own ends if only he remain true in heart to his own faith. The Beduin Arabs are not numerous, but in spring and summer their black tents may be seen in many of the valleys.

Feudalism prevailed from the Crusades till the middle of the nineteenth century. The bitter and bloody contentions of opposing princelings, especially Maronite and Druse, fomented



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by the Turks, kept down the strength of the turbulent mountaineers. But in this fierce warfare, even at its worst and wildest, women and children were never molested. The civil war of the "forties," and the desperate massacres of 1860, when amid Christian jealousies and incompetence, Turkish treachery, Moslem duplicity, and Druse savagery, the mountain was drenched in blood, evoked interference by the Christian Powers.

Old feudal families rapidly decayed, and "princes" are found to-day in very humble callings. A carriage driver whose fare had been heaping reproaches and curses upon him for the slowness of his horses, reined up on approaching a village, and said gently: "Would your excellency mind leaving the rest

of your curses for the return journey? This happens to be my own village, and I am still a prince here!"

The solidly-built village houses are usually of one-room. An outside stair leads to the roof of hard-rolled earth. Here grain and fruit are spread in the sun, and many-coloured clothes are dried. An "upper room" may shelter strangers. Proclamations from the roof reach far in the quiet mountain air. On mild evenings happy parties gather here to eat, drink, and sing, with much clapping of hands. In summer the roof is the favourite sleeping-place.

On entering the house boots are put off before stepping on to the raised part of the floor. There is little furniture—a straw mat, a rug, a few straw-stuffed cushions, beds or mattresses, rolled up



### PEACEFUL HUSBANDRY MARKS THE LIFE OF THE ONCE WARLIKE DRUSE

Of mixed Syrian and Arabian origin, deriving their name and faith from an eleventh-century Persian mystic, Durazy, the Druses (or Druzes) of the Lebanon worship in secluded places, drink nothing but milk and water, eat only the fruit of their own farms and the flesh of their own flocks, make their own clothing and, once a warlike race, have mostly settled down to peaceful avocations

*Photo, the Rev. W. Ewing*





# **WHERE WAVES A CEDAR COPSE BENEATH A SNOW-STREAKED MOUNT**

Known to the ancients as the noblest of trees, the cedar is one of a widely-extended species of conifer, of which notable groups are the famous *Cedrus Libani*, the wood of which Solomon used in the building of the Temple; the *Cedrus deodara* of the Himalayas; and the *Cedrus atlantica* of the Atlas Mountains. The cedars of Lebanon still form an attractive feature of the landscape

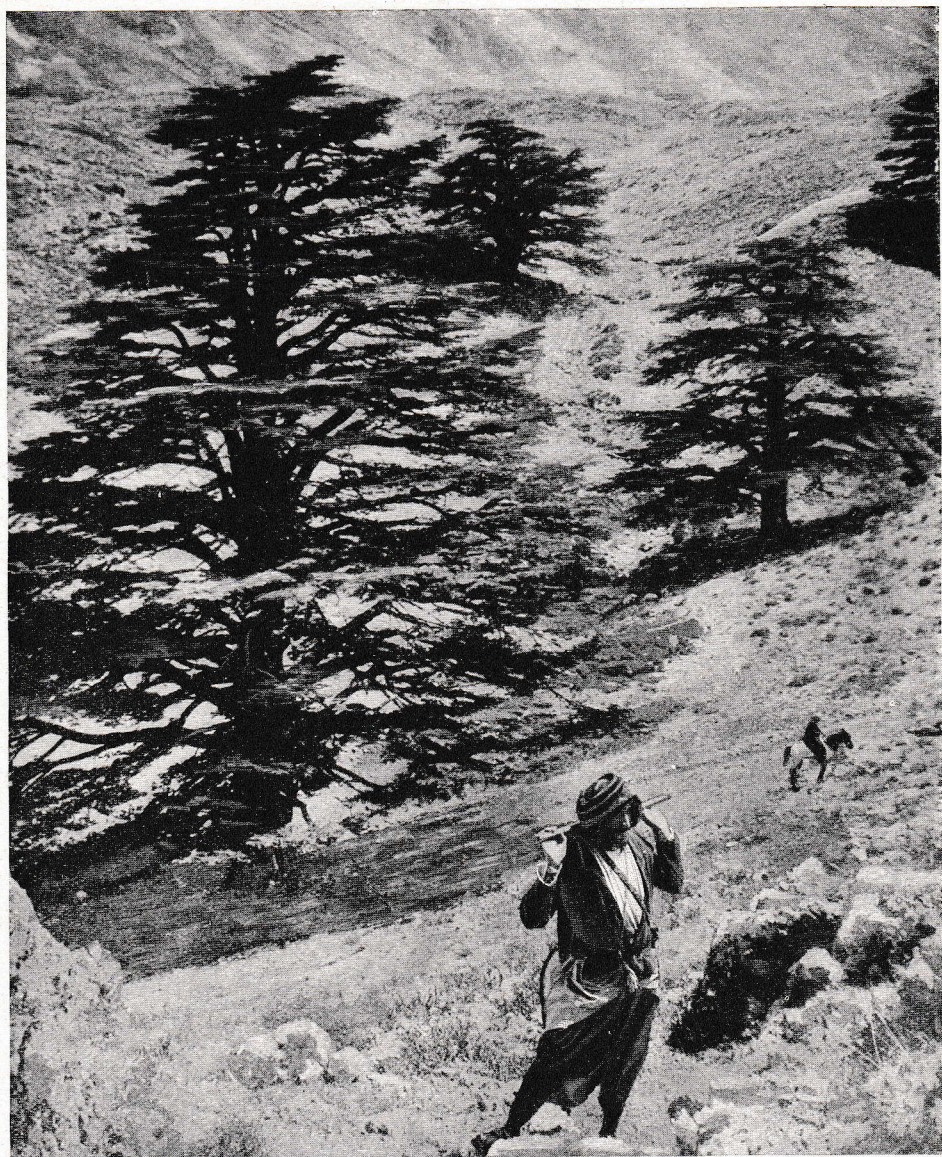
*Photo, Underwood Press Service*

by day in a recess in the wall, water-jar, brazier for charcoal fire, cooking-pots, and a large tray. Earthenware magazines hold supplies of grain. The family spend the long, dark winter nights on the floor, with the animals—mules, donkeys, cows, sheep, goats, dogs, and poultry—on the lower level. The cold mountain air is rigorously

excluded. A smoky oil lamp sheds a dim light. Welcome is the return of summer and the life of the open air.

The streets are crooked, narrow, with a gutter in the middle often filled with garbage. As the streets are unlit at night, passengers must carry lanterns. There is the inevitable café, where time is wasted over pipes and games of





#### FAR-FAMED TREES THAT STILL FORM LEBANON'S "GLORY."

As in biblical times, so to-day, the cedar is still the finest of the trees of Lebanon, growing to a height of from eighty to one hundred feet. Some of these far-famed trees are believed to be thousands of years old. The rugged ridge-broken peak, known as Djebel-el-Arz (the mountain of the cedars) rises over 7,700 ft. and is generally covered with snow

*Photo, Underwood Press Service*

chance. Common trades are those of tailor, shoemaker, blacksmith, and carpenter. At intervals shops like cupboards open on the streets. Druses never condescend to learn a trade, nor will they become shopkeepers. They are proud tillers of the soil.

Fishermen still cast their nets along the coast. Culture of the silkworm

employs not a few. Most men toil in field, vineyard, or orchard. Others tend the flocks in the wide pastures. Huntsmen find the wild boar, the brown bear, and the wolf in jungle and remote upland. The bolder leopard comes at times close to the villages. Stream, pool, and reservoir are connected with field and terrace by a



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network of little channels. Charming it is at evening, when the sluices are opened, to hear the musical tinkle of running water, and see white limbs twinkling amid the greenery, as with laughter and song the husbandmen guide the life-giving stream to the roots of every tree. Much industry

and skill are required to build and maintain the terrace walls, and keep the irrigation channels in repair.

On ground softened by irrigation wheat and barley are sown, ploughed down and well rooted before the winter snow buries them. In more inaccessible and difficult spots the soil is turned



### AMID THE WILD MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS OF NORTHERN LEBANON

Here, where nature is seen in its most impressive aspect, the Nahr Kadisha, or holy river, is seen tumbling over its rocky bed in a deep ravine between the everlasting hills. Known also as it nears Tripoli town as the Nahr Abu Ali, it rises in one of the more elevated peaks of the Lebanon range, and descends rapidly in great bends until it reaches the sea by "Little Damascus"





#### GATHERING IN THE RICH OLIVE HARVEST OF LEBANON

A native of Syria, the olive tree abounds in Lebanon, particularly in the area between Beirut and Sidon. Of even more importance than the mulberry, its green or black fruit yields great quantities of oil for human consumption as well as for the soap factories of Syria and the Levant, while the daily fare of the poor consists to a great extent of bread and olives

*Photo, the Rev. W. Ewing*

with a spade, one man guiding it by the handle, another pulling on a cord fastened near the blade. A brave show the mountain makes in spring, with waving grain, foliage, and blossom, the flame of oleander bloom flecking the dark green of the torrent beds.

Barley first, and then wheat are cut with the sickle in April and May, and carried

by ass or camel to the threshing-floor. "Treading-out" by oxen and winnowing the grain occupy the peasants for months. One was told of machines in the West that could thresh and winnow in a fortnight all the grain within sight on the Bika. "Mashallah!" he exclaimed. "And what do you do the rest of the year?" Women still use



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### RUGGED AS HIS NATIVE HILLS

If somewhat wild in aspect this mountain guide of Lebanon is hardy, plausible, and, like most of his fellows, equal to emergencies, though garbed so variously as to suggest that his wardrobe is acquired by chance

*Photo, the Rev. W. Ewing*

the little hand-mill, but most of the grinding is done in water-mills in the valleys.

The ripe olives are beaten from the branches, gathered by men, women, and children, and assorted. Many are pickled, and are eaten with bread. From others oil is obtained, the finest by crushing and gentle pressure, the

inferior kinds by heavier pressure and heat. The olive is extensively used in cooking, and its export is profitable.

Grapes are abundant and excellent. Lebanon wine is renowned. Much of the best is made in the monasteries. The monks also distil arak, an ardent spirit, the love of which is not confined to the men who have renounced the world. The juice of ripe grapes is boiled down to make dibs, or "grape honey." It is of a clear amber hue, and keeps well as a preserve.

Hospitality prevailing in the mountain makes travelling cheap. No "guest of God" is ever turned away. Even the fugitive criminal may claim food and shelter. The *lex talionis* and *vendetta* still hold place. If a culprit escape, vengeance may fall on any relative. Blood feuds have raged through generations, with ghastly effects. Now honour is often satisfied by money payments.

The women help with outdoor work. They wash, bake, cook, and draw water. Gossip at the fountain is their morning newspaper. A sheep is often

kept and fattened, the women actually stuffing it with mulberry leaves. Meat and fat for winter and wool for warm clothing are thus provided.

The prohibited degrees of consanguinity are greatly extended among Christians, but marriages between relatives are common. The Church exacts fees for permission to marry



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within these degrees. The closer the relationship, the higher the fees. These things are arranged by parents or guardians, not by the young people chiefly concerned.

The betrothal is marked by great festivity. The bridegroom exhibits the "dowry" he will give the bride—money, raiment, jewelry. This is the real plighting of troth, officially confirmed by the marriage, when, with general rejoicing, the bride is led to her husband's home, and all the brilliancy of Oriental attire is displayed. White, blue, red, and purple are favourite colours.

The women's horn, worn on the forehead, eighteen to twenty inches high, from which the veil was draped, has almost disappeared. It is said that a lady about to receive Communion accidentally upset the elements with her horn. This roused priestly hostility. The horn lingered longest among the Druses.

A Druse may have only one wife at a time. He pays for her a price which varies with her social standing. But divorce is easy. If he wants a change he has only to say to her, "Rūhi ila ahlik!" ("Be off to your relatives!") and the thing is done. But to wed again money is needed, and if divorced for a trivial cause, the wife may claim repayment of her "dowry."

Baby daughters are not wanted. Baby boys are welcomed with boisterous joy. The mother of many sons is honoured. Her children will yet talk with the enemy in the gate.

Children are allowed great licence. A little boy is often tyrant of the home. A man is always known as the father of his first-born son—e.g. Abu Selim, "father of Selim." It is a title of honour. A man who has no son may be called in courtesy "father" of So-and-so, as of the son he should have had. A concourse of friends witnesses the last hours of the dying, thus showing respect. The moment he dies the company raise a wild outburst of grief, assisted by professionals paid for their dolorous efforts. The body is washed, dressed in the best clothes, and buried in a few hours, with extravagant tokens of sorrow. Women beat their breasts, tear their hair, and shout in frenzy the name of the dead, bewailing his fate.

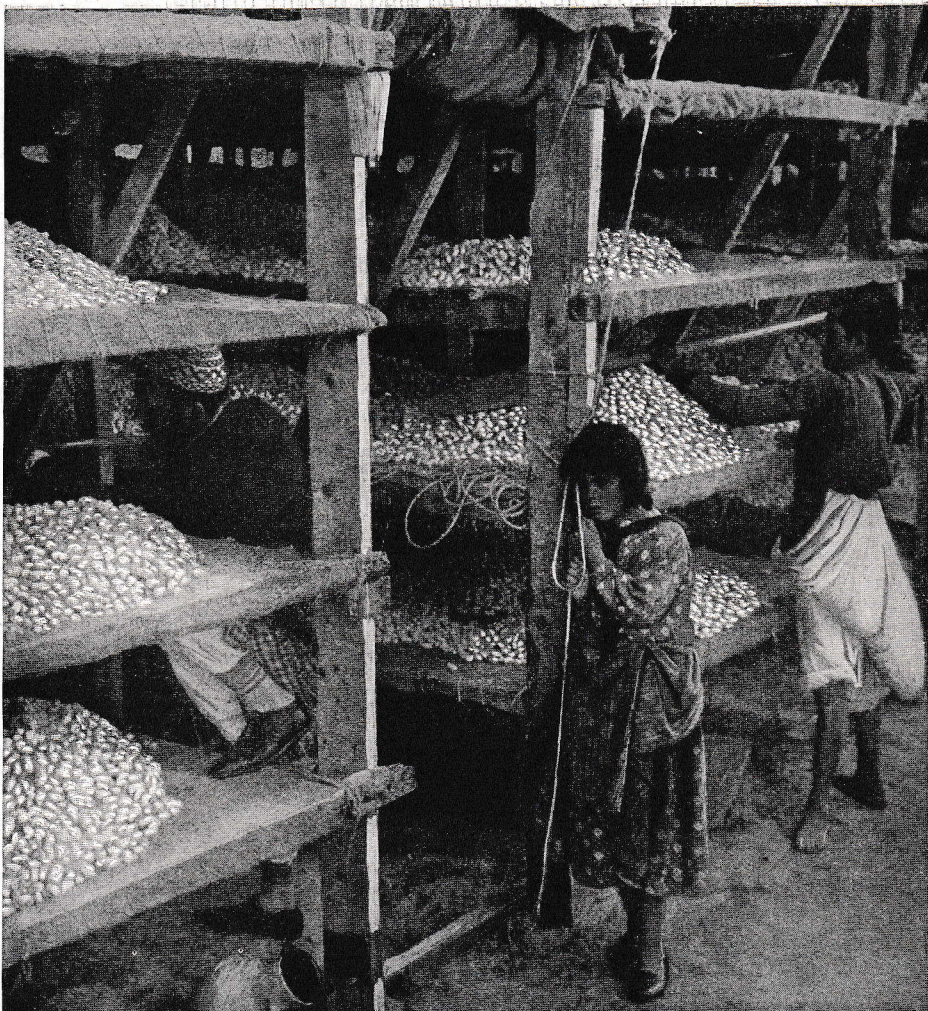


### SPRINGTIME TASK OF LEBANON'S CHILDREN

The young folk are feeding silkworms with fresh mulberry leaves. When the cocoons have been spun and the silk has been wound, French factories will turn the fibre into beautiful textures for the adornment of wealth and fashion

*Photo, Underwood Press Service*





#### GOLDEN CASKETS CONTAINING THE LEIFWORK OF THE DEAD PUPAE

After the pupae of the silkworm have been killed by steaming, the cocoons are placed on shelves in drying sheds, being turned over daily with wooden peels or shovels to prevent decomposition of the dead insects within. The drying process extends over three months, and Lebanon children help in the work involved. The contents of this shed represent no inconsiderable fortune to the owner

*Photo, Underwood Press Service*

Druses and Moslems hold no funeral service. No mourning is worn. For weeks the women frequent the grave "to weep there," chanting sad, brief threnodies as they sit, their bodies swaying to the rhythm.

Superstition dies slowly. Many "holy places" are visited by multitudes at certain seasons, and at other times by individuals for personal reasons. Each community has its shrines—in cave, grove, or monastery, by lonely tree, or in the white-domed sanctuaries that crown so many heights. Vows are paid,

gifts presented, and homage offered to the spirit of saint or prophet dwelling there. Devotees hope, by winning his favour, to gain their heart's desire. He is revered and feared. Anything entrusted to his care and left in the open shrine is absolutely safe. A man may swear by God and break his vow, but a vow taken in the saint's name he will in no wise violate.

Certain shrines, nominally Christian, are frequented also by Druse, Metawileh, Moslem, Jew, and Beduin Arab. These must have been already sacred spots





#### BUYING THE SILK OF COMMERCE IN ITS COCOON FORM

Sericulturists of the Lebanon have brought the produce of their devoted labour to market, and a silk merchant is passing the egg-shaped cocoons through a critical examination before deciding to buy them. The golden cocoons, silken sheaths spun by the larvae of a mulberry-feeding moth, vary in size and quality according to the care bestowed on the silkworms in the rearing-houses

*Photo, Underwood Press Service*

in the dim days of which no record survives, ere present religious divisions arose. This must be true also of many a mountain shrine. Ancient sanctity clings to them, and the glamour of hoary antiquity. Names may have changed and points of ritual altered, but no doubt much in the practice of to-day reflects that of the far-off ancestors who, in the world's grey morning, gathered for worship upon these "high places."

Many passages in the Old Testament describe the physical features and

fruitfulness of "the mountain." The earliest settlers were Semite nomads from Arabia. The great road along the shore was a link between the dwellers on the Nile and the empires north and east. Phoenician, Babylonian, Assyrian, Greek, and Roman in turn dominated the country, but from the Greek period to modern times the history of Lebanon was merged in that of Syria, the subject of a separate chapter in this work.

The Turks under Osman invaded the country in the sixteenth century. The



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Egyptians under Ibrahim Pasha held sway between 1830 and 1841. Then the forces of the Padishah returned and they remained until they were cast out by the British under General Allenby, in the course of the Great War.

In the rivalry of Greek and Latin for the "protection" of the holy places, Suleiman granted special privileges to France (1535), of which she made but little. Her claim was eclipsed by the influence of the French Revolution and



YOUNG WORKERS IN A SILK FACTORY OF LEBANON

These young people are engaged, like the Japanese workers shown on page 3193, in breaking the cocoons and picking out the thread. The cocoons are immersed in hot water, to which a little alkali is added, and are stirred until the floss comes away, when they are transferred to other vessels containing hot water, where they float while the silk is reeled off

*Photo, Underwood Press Service*



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the anti-Christian policy of Napoleon. In the early nineteenth century Lebanon was a hot-bed of international intrigue. The Sultan was nominal ruler, but for the real power great feudal families, Maronite and Druse, were ever

at strife. A notable Druse who professed Christianity, Beshir Omar esh-Shehab, held sway from 1788-1840. He became a tool of Ibrahim Pasha, who introduced religious bitterness into the strife, hitherto largely social,



### SIMPLE APPLIANCES SUFFICE FOR SKILFUL FINGERS

From the hexagonal frame around which a hank of raw silk, fresh from cocoons, has been wound, this young craftsman transfers it to another light reel, and then winds it on bobbins. The lone handworker has need of a trained eye and delicate touch, or the quality of the silk will suffer, but with these natural gifts and the aid of quite simple tools admirable results can be obtained

*Photo, Underwood Press Service*





#### RESTFUL LEISURE THAT TEMPERS THE HOURS OF TOIL

These shepherds of the Lebanon, laying aside for the nonce their daily cares, are extracting much bodily solace from stimulating coffee and grateful hookah what time they derive a certain degree of mental recreation from a game of backgammon played in the quiet courtyard of a rural café. They are seated on wooden stools, with the playing-board on a wooden trestle fixed up between them



#### SMILING YOUNG FACES FRONTING A BACKGROUND OF GRACEFUL PALMS

Children of the Lebanon lead, as a rule, an actively industrious life, especially in what is called the silk season, when the schools are closed and the people fill houses and sheds with flat baskets swarming with tiny silkworms which the young people feed with mulberry leaves while their elders prepare the branches of broom and briars on which the cocoons will later be woven

*Photos, the Rev. W. Ewing*





#### VIRILE VILLAGERS OF THE SYRIAN MONT BLANC

In Lebanon is nurtured a hardy race of intelligent highlanders, and, despite heavy emigration since the middle of the nineteenth century, the mountain State is more thickly populated than Switzerland. Returned emigrants have dotted the hillsides with substantial villas of a Western type with red-tiled roofs, and have interested themselves in improving the status of their compatriots

*Photo. the Rev. W. Ewing*





#### BEARERS OF THE BURDEN IN THE HIGHLANDS OF LEBANON

The load of which this pleasant woman is in charge serves as a kind of saddle, and the double burden of load and rider falls on the back of the patient donkey, whose foal is walking by its side, happily reckless of the burdens to come. Of the Syrian donkeys the most prized is a large white variety bred by Beduins; it is usually more active than the European breed

*Photo, the Rev. W. Ewing*

between Maronite and Druse. Napoleon's Syrian campaign (1799) brought in the British, who, with the Austrians, after the Egyptian occupation (1831-1840) restored Syria to the Porte. Favour shown to opposing factions engendered ill-will among the Christian Powers.

The Egyptian occupation also opened Lebanon to Europe. Until then, save for visitors attracted by the settlement at Joun (1814-1839) of Lady Hester Stanhope, a niece of Pitt, it had remained outside the politico-economic purview of the West. Now the rival factions, if they did not regard one

another more kindly, were taught to look for foreign support.

An indirect result of the Crimean War of 1854-1856 was the awful massacre of 1860. Then, through intervention of the Great Powers, Lebanon, excluding Beirut, an area of about 2,600 square miles, with over 300,000 inhabitants, was organized as an independent Liwa or Sanjak under a Christian governor, nominated by the Sultan and approved by the Great Powers. The next half century of comparative prosperity saw the building of road and railway between Beirut and Damascus, the entrance of German and German Jew influence,



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and the rise of the Young Turks. Then came the Great War.

The Supreme Council at San Remo, on Sept. 1, 1920, gave to France the mandatory power over Syria, and declared Great Lebanon to be a State extending north and south from Dahr el Kodib to the frontier of Palestine, and west to east from the sea to the Anti-Lebanon range. Beirut, the chief

port (population 91,000), was made administrative capital, and the new State was given a national flag—the French Tricolour with a cedar superimposed on the white ground. At Zahleh in 1920, General Gouraud announced the reincorporation with Lebanon of the four cazas of Baalbek, Bekka, Rasheya, and Hasbeya. France, he declared, was completing her work of 1860-62.



### PROCLAMATION OF GREAT LEBANON AS A SEPARATE STATE

General Gouraud, French High Commissioner, visited Beirut on Sept. 1, 1920, and proclaimed Great Lebanon a State. The scene was dramatic as, seated between dignified elders of this ancient people, the representative of France listened to the proclamation that was the realization of their hopes and a reflection of the glory of his own country





**"REMEMBERING AFFLICTION AND MISERY, THE WORMWOOD AND THE GALL"**

Near a winding track that intersects a slope of the wild mountain uplands and is for the time being deserted, with the open sky above them and nothing untoward to break the solemn silence around, these five daughters of a Lebanon household, united in the bondage of common grief, have met to weep and pray beside the lonely grave of a departed loved one



**MULETEERS OF THE "GOOD LAND THAT IS BEYOND JORDAN"**

They are stalwart, intelligent types of the Druses, a people once famous for their fighting qualities, and their present calling is due to the demand created by the fact that the mountain gorges of their country have become popular with summer tourists as well as with sufferers from the malignant fevers of Syria and Egypt, who find in the cool, fresh air and balsam of the forests unfailing restoratives

*Photos, the Rev. W. Ewing*